THIS WEEK AT THE THEATRES

SALT LAKE THEATRE.—Monday and Tuesday, "Our New Minister"; Nance O'Neil in repertoire: Wednesday, "Magda"; Thursday, "Elizabeth"; Friday, "The Jewess"; Saturday matinee, "Camille"; Saturday night, "Hetta Gabler."

GRAND THEATRE—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Wednesday matinee, "Resurrection"; Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Saturday matinee, "California."

A GOOD deal has been said in this department about the so-called problem plays and their effect on the people who see them. There is no question about the evil influence of productions of the "Camille," "Zaza," "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" type and others that Salt Lake has seen this season. Neither is there any question about their profitableness. Unfortunately, too many theatrical managers are in the business purely to make money.

Now that is a not unworthy ambition, but the manager whose sole object is to make money is as unworthy as the employe who works only for his salary. A hopeful sign of the times is found in the big business which is being done by the legitimate productions. It indicates that the theatrical public is returning to its first love—the pure, unalloyed, unmistakably great drama.

And in this connection a short contribution from the pen of Frederick Warde to the Chicago Inter Ocean will be apropos. Mr. Warde writes:

"Although the elementary principles of human nature are, and have been, the same the world over, temperament and taste among the inhabitants of our large cities are as diversified as their complexions—developed according to their capacity by study, conditions and environment. Hence the necessity of almost every sort of entertainment for their amusement and recreation—from the classic drama to negro ragtime. Again, the nervous strain of the strenuous life of today demands relief in light and frivolous amusements that do not tax the mental faculties, yet divert the mind.

"These conditions justify the existence of so many phases of dramatic entertainment, but the parent trunk from which these branches spring and flourish with more or less credit is the classic drama, an institution more than 2,000 years old, and today sounder, stronger, grander than at any time in its history; strengthened by the contributions of the master minds of the intervening centuries, developed by the evolution of scientific progress, and appreciated by the superior intelligence of universal education.

"I am led to this conclusion by the experience of some twenty-five years in striving to adequately present this form of the drama to the American people, and I find that, in spite of the temporary success of problem plays, sensational situations, realistic romances and dairy-farm dramas, that have an ephemeral existence, and then cease to be even a memory, the classic drama holds its own in the minds and hearts of men, is the criterion of taste, the test of ability and the accepted mirror of nature after, or rather before, all.

"The American stage today presents elaborate revivals of 'Julius Caesar,' 'Hamlet' and 'The Tempest,' while several tragedians are touring the country in varied Shakespearean repertoires; the stock companies at frequent intervals present worthy performances of the great master's plays that fill their theatres, and we are promised in the near future revivals of 'Macbeth' and 'Much Ado About Nothing,' an all-star cast of 'Romeo and Juliet,' and a Shakespearean venture by a worthy lady and gentleman who have hitherto confined their efforts to the romantic drama. These, with prospective visits from several European representatives of the classic and legitimate drama, uphold the honor and dignity of the stage.

"What more encouragement could we ask? We have no subsidized theatre, so all of these ventures are launched by men who are seeking a profitable field of investment, and expect, and will no doubt realize, a handsome return for their enterprise.

"The literary departments of our universities, normal and public schools, include the Shakespearean and classic dramas in their curriculum as the highest form of poetic expression. The clergy from the pulpit, the orator from the rostrum, the advocate from the bar and the jurist from the bench, alike quote the classic drama to argue and convince. It is a part of our life; without it the scholar is ignorant, the gentleman incomplete, the citizen imperfect. Fear not a moment for the classic drama. It will exist when we shall long have passed away, to teach its ennobling lessons by the force of its glorious examples, to arouse our sympathy by its pictures of human suffering and endurance, and exalt our imagination by its sublime philosophy."

STORIES ABOUT PLAYERS.

It hasn't been a joyous season with Marie Dressler, that effervescent and always entertaining actress, so well known in Cleveland, and who will soon appear in the Empire. According to the Chicago Inter-Ocean the hearty comedienne has spent a good part of the season in bed, and is just now recovering from a spell of typhoid fever, which threatened to prove just a little too much for her. Still Miss Dressler refuses to be counted out altogether. She met a friend at Atlantic City the other day, while she was taking the sun.

"Well," exclaimed Miss Dressler, as she lolled back complacently in her invalid's chair, "here I am again, you see. They can't kill old Marie, unless they take an ax to her."

It may be recalled that during the first part of her illness Miss Dressler's mother died, and it was necessary to keep the news from the comedienne until she was convalescent. Her nurse tells a somewhat remarkable story of the way Miss Dressler finally learned the truth.

After the fever had broken and Miss Dressler began to pick up, the doctors, still fearing the result, postponed the news from day to day. Finally one night about five weeks after her mother's death, Miss Dressler awoke with a shriek and sat up in bed wringing her hands. The nurse hurried to her.

"Turn on all the lights," said Miss Dressler quite calmly, "and then come here and look me in the face. I want to ask you something."

The nurse, surprised and apprehensive, obeyed. Miss Dressler looked her in the eye and said:

"There's no use you trying to lie to me. I know what has happened. Mother is dead."

"How did you guess, Miss Dressler?" cried the nurse.

"I didn't guess. I dreamed it just now. I went down to the house at Bayside. It was all boarded up and deserted. I broke into the house. It was empty except for a sofa lying in a corner of the sitting room. Something was lying on the sofa covered with cloth. I rushed over to it and tried to wrench the covering off it. I couldn't for a long time. Then finally I uncovered the face. It was mother.

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David Belasco has one member in his company, now supporting Mrs. Leslie Carter in "Du Barry," who has more dressers and attendants than the star herself. His name is not on the programme, though he appears, by proxy, upon the salary list. He makes a brief entrance in the effective third scene of the last act, and, while he may be classed merely as a "walking gentleman" and has only a "thinking part," his role is of such importance that he and Mrs. Leslie Carter share the center of the stage. He and the star are in the tumbril scene—Mrs. Carter in the body of the cart and he between the shafts. It is not known that any one has given a name to this equine actor, whose proud privilege is it to haul la Du Barry, in the person of the great Mrs. Carter, to her doom. But the name is not important. It is enough that his appearance upon the stage is a most dramatic one, and that, as he stands there, he is a thing of beauty to the audience, many of whom have remarked that no finer steed ever graced the footlights.

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People who live continuously in the large cities hardly realize the extent to which the small villages of the country are invaded each year by "fakirs" giving open-air "medicine" performances or perhaps a bit more ambitious show in a little round tent. The season is rapidly approaching now and the want columns of the professional papers strongly evidence the activity that is stirring managers and performers alike. The managers of these shows no doubt have their troubles, for in all the advertisements there are injunctions against drinking and extreme care is promised in forwarding railroad fares to the rendezvous of the organization. The advertisements are couched in the most terse terms of the profession, and are as interesting to the layman as to those directly concerned, only in a different light. One of these ads reads:

"Wanted, at once, sketch team up in acts and experienced in med, biz. Change for two weeks. Gent do either Dutch or Irish. We have black lace enough. Tickets advanced if necessary."

And here is another:

"Wanted for the Shaw Comedy company, pianist, who doubles baritone or trombone; also all kinds specialty people who double brass and change often. Must make good and be ladies and gentlemen, also good dressers on and off. No dogs. Pay your own, and lowest. Sure salary. Week stands usually. Address."

The shark will be abroad in the land once more, while the market in two-headed devil fish women is at a low ebb and bargains are the rule, as these two special notices witness:

"For sale cheap—The only shark in U. S. Captured at Cape May, N. J.; one shark banner, 7x12; little horse banner, dragon banner, one rat eater banner."

"For sale—The two-headed devil fish woman, only $35. The greatest side show, platform or store show attraction ever known."

Two other characteristic advertisements are like this:

"Wanted—Al comedian and dancer, sketch team, etc. Must be sober and reliable. Change for week. Ready to join on wire. Preference to piano players. Other useful people, write. Salary low, but sure. Long season. Tell it all first letter, and state all you do. Ex-managers and wise guys, save stamps."

"Wanted—Quick—Tuba player to double stage; pianist, to play B. drum in band. State low, sure salary. Write 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' Co., Beverly, O. P. S.—Drunks unloaded as fast as they light."

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Richard Mansfield was describing a performance of "Julius Caesar" that he had seen in his youth.

"I, as Brutus," Mr. Mansfield said, die slowly, but beside the Brutus of the old-time performance my death is swift. The old Brutus was an unspeakably long time dying, so very long a time that I was somewhat in sympathy with the voice in the gallery that shouted reprovingly to him in the midst of his death agony:

"'Oh, die, Brutus. Hurry up and die!'

"But another voice on the other side of the gallery disliked this interruption.

"'Be quiet, you duffer!' it yelled; and then in an encouraging and mild tone, it said to the actor on the stage:

"'Take your time, sir, about dying. Take your time.'"

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"It often happens," said David Belasco, while talking about some of the mechanical effects used in "The Darling of the Gods," "that tricks of the simplest description arouse the popular wonder and curiosity to the greatest extent, while, on the other hand, the most original, delicate and daring work passes unnoticed by all save professional experts. A great many years ago, when I was learning the business of mounting and producing plays, I introduced a cat into 'Hearts of Oak'—the play that made the late James A. Herne famous. We had a live baby in the play, too, which excited a tremendous amount of interest, but I think the cat created more talk and wonder because everyone is familiar with the habits of that domestic animal and knows how difficult it is to teach one to perform even the simplest trick.

"Every night, at a certain cue, this cat came on the stage, walked across to the fireplace, stretched herself and then lay down in front of the blazing hearth, for we burned real fire in a gas log in order to make the scene more realistic and natural. The cat did her part so easily and naturally that she frequently got a round of applause, and it always happened that before we had played three nights in a town the most popular topic of conversation was, 'How did they ever train that cat to come on the stage, stretch herself and lie down in front of the fire?'

"Night after night the cat took her cue and went through her little act to the wonder and delight of all beholders. It really seemed like a remarkable performance on her part; but, after all, her education was a very simple matter. A few minutes before it was time for her to go on we used to put her in a basket just large enough to hold her comfortably without giving her a chance to change her position, and then leave her in a cool place in the cellar. At the proper time she was brought upstairs and released in the entrance in time to answer her cue. Of course she walked across the stage to where the fire was burning, and when she got there what was there to do except to stretch herself as a measure of relief after her cramped position in the basket and then lie down in the warmth of the blazing log? The fact is, it would have been very difficult, indeed, to train her to do anything else under the circumstances."

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The play had reached the climax of the third act, and the audience in the primitive opera house of the frontier village sat breathlessly awaiting the outcome, says the Chicago Tribune.

"Ah, ha-ha!" snarled the villain, pushing open the door of the dungeon where the hero lay bound in chains.

"Ah, ha-ha! Montgomery Murgatroyd, you are in my power at last! Your hour has come!"

The villain drew a long knife from his belt and advanced upon his victim.

"I will give you one minute to say your prayers!" he hissed, savagely, raising the knife above the head of the helpless wretch.

At this moment Grizzly Hank, the village desperado, rose in his seat.

"Pardner," he said, addressing the villain, "I reckon this is the place whar I was to git up an' offer to be one of three men to take ye out an' hang ye, but I back out."

Here he threw a five-dollar gold piece on the stage.

"Thar's the money ye gin me fur agreein' to make the spiel!" he exclaimed. "I weaken, pard. I didn't know what an infernally bad actor he was. Go ahead an' kill 'im!"

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At somebody's tea last week Miss Elsie De Wolfe and Augustus Thomas, the playwright, met for the first time. After congratulating him on the great success of "The Earl of Pawtucket," Miss De Wolfe, who opened at the Madison Square theatre in "Cynthia" last Monday night, exclaimed: "And I hope you realize how awfully sorry I am to turn you out, Mr. Thomas. But my contract was signed weeks before there was any thought of producing your play there, and as there was no other theatre vacant, of course"——

"I understand," laughed Mr. Thomas. "In spite of our great financial success we couldn't keep De Wolfe from the door."

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The Amalgamated Association of Press Agents, at a recent meeting held in New York, unanimously adopted the following declaration of principles:

"The waste basket should be abolished. It gathers germs of disease.

"Hell hath no fury like a journalist scorned.

"De Quincey's 'Confessions of an Opium Eater' should be found in every library.

"The smoke nuisance, so-called, should not be abolished.

"When all else fails, lose a diamond.

"In times of great trouble, use the telephone. It is easier to pour your innermost consciousness into a receiver that naturally rubbers than into the cold, deaf ear of a city editor.

"Always write 'Exclusive' or 'Not duplicated in your city' at the beginning of every typewritten story. It flatters the editor, and some day he may believe you.

"Let the public understand once and for all that the newspapers are run for your benefit, and not for theirs.

"If you don't like the way your copy is treated, insist that the name of your attraction never again be mentioned, but keep on sending in your matter just the same. That cows the editor and makes him fearful that without you his paper would never get to press.

"Never be prepared to prove the truth of your stories. That looks like preparation and makes the editor suspicious."

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Dramatic Critic William Winter of the New York Tribune, the Nestor of the profession, continues to view the stage with a troubled and dissatisfied eye, as this brief editorial from a recent issue of that eminent journal would indicate:

"That great actor, John Gilbert, who looms larger and larger as he recedes in the vista of the past, wrote these words: 'I have no sympathy with those persons who regard with indifference the state and prospect of the legitimate drama. I cannot regard with apathy a branch of art which appeals directly to the most earnest and ennobling impulses of humanity, which, in its graver forms, is auxiliary to moral refinement, and in its lighter, to a healthy impartment of satire or of mirth. Let us hope that spectacle, sensational and burlesque plays are coming to their last days, and that the time is not far distant when the great public will have something to listen to.'

"The time seems to be as far distant as ever."

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Will William Gillette ever play "Hamlet"? It will take a Sherlock Holmes to find out. Again has the date for his assumption of the part of the melancholy Dane been set back on the clock of time.

Charles Frohman sends word from London that instead of Mr. Gillette producing "Hamlet" next autumn, as announced, he will appear in J. M. Barrie's "The Admirable Crichton." This turn of affairs is spoken of as an "unusual combination," giving Mr. Gillette a chance to create a role "as unique in its way as Hamlet."

Poor "Hamlet," thus made to take a back seat, will, it is declared, follow "The Admirable Crichton." Nothing is said about the possibility of another chance for an "unusual combination" coming along, and thus relegating the tragedy, so far as Mr. Gillette's repertoire is concerned, to a place still farther into the future.

"The Admirable Crichton" is said to be a really admirable comedy. It has had six months of more than ordinary success at Mr. Frohman's Duke of York theatre in London.

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Says the New York Telegraph: American habits of work, says a writer in Harper's Weekly, account for the fact that Europe is rich in elegant American widows and orphans, while churchyards at home are full of young men's graves. There is, no doubt, much truth in this view. The American business man begins work early and stops late, and when he plays he often plays harder than he works.

But American business men are not the only hard workers. The successful American actor and actress are hard upon his nimble heels. Recent developments among player folk give a specially timely point to this assertion. Half a dozen names familiar to every play-goer recur at once to the mind. There is David Belasco, whose doctor has ordered him to Europe for rest; Clyde Fitch, who was recently forced to seek the health-bringing breezes of Atlantic City; Miss Maude Adams, whose arduous season a year ago unfitted her for work this year; Miss Ethel Barrymore, whose frail health forced her to take a short rest in the middle of her season; Joseph Humphreys and Joseph W. Wheelock, jr., who are both in the west for the benefit of their lungs; Miss Annie Russell, who missed several performances this week by reason of illness attributable to overwork, and others too numerous to mention. Others there are, too, who are too busy to rest, but who will be overtaken by the bogey man of nervous prostration "if they don't watch out."

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After all these theatrical performers and managers, with their petty ambitions, and their foolish quarrels, are dull and uninteresting in comparison with the big world of grand opera. Here is the entertainment of kings. There is something tremendous about it. The profits are prodigious, the losses are enormous, the directors are multi-millionaires, the boxes are worth $100,000 apiece, the impresario is an artistic Colossus, the singers are the favorites of royalty, world famous, princely in income. The receipts of grand opera average $8,000 a night. It is a great theatrical production, whose expenses amount to $2,500 a week. It is a modest operatic perfomance whose expense is less than $30,000 a week. Every Monday morning Maurice Grau stands to lose a fortune. It costs from $5,000 to $8,000 to raise the curtain of the Metropolitan. An actress is lucky if she earns $150 a week. A prima donna is aggrieved if she does not earn $4,000 a week. On a fashionable night at the opera $500,000,000 sit in the boxes and chairs, and the ladies wear $50,000,000 worth of diamonds around their necks and in their hair. On one occasion, the night of the gala performance in honor of Prince Henry, the box office took in $67,000, and even in the topmost gallery, or family circle, the women were in full dress. It cost $5 to stand up that night, $30 to sit down. An actor may earn $10,000 a year, a tenor earns $50,000 in five months. Throughout her American season next winter Adelina Patti will receive $4,500 a night, or computing the time of her singing, about $100 a minute. One night last week Mme. Gadski, the youngest of the great prima donnas, scarce 30, earned $1,000 for singing exactly fifteen minutes. A million dollars is paid into the Metropolitan box office every winter for opera. A single row of boxes in what is called the Diamond circle is valued at $3,700,000, more than the real estate cost of the entire building.

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A New York exchange says: Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Milton Royle are such strangers they are almost entitled to be called a novelty, though they are appearing in "The Highball Family."

This is one of the very few sketches with intoxication for its theme which is funny and not unpleasant, even when the two women feign drunkenness. It is saved from any suggestion of unpleasantness by the fact that it is well written and well played. It is one of the best bits in the Royle repertoire, and is crowded with laughs.

Mr. Royle is his old self, with a swing to his work as though he liked acting. Mrs. Royle has never been better since she was in vaudeville. The part of the mother-in-law is a trying one, but she got out of it all that was to be had, and gave us besides good humor.

PRESS AGENTS' PROMISE.

One of the dramatic events of the present season will be the first presentation here of Denman Thompson and George W. Ryer's new comedy drama of rural New England life, "Our New Minister," which takes place at the Salt Lake theatre Monday and Tuesday nights. The new play was not seen outside of New York and Boston and the eastern circuits all last season, it having met with such a hearty reception that it played many towns three and four times. "Our New Minister" presents a series of vivid and natural scenes of life in any rural community of New England at the present day, and affords ample opportunity for dramatic and comedy work, which is developed to excellent advantage by an unusually fine company of players. The scene of the play is in Hardscrabble, N. H. A great scenic production is carried.

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Nance O'Neil, with her big tragic voice, her beautiful face and supple body, coupled with a power of expression that is only born of genius, is rapidly becoming recognized as the leading tragedienne of the world. Bernhardt, Duse and Modjeska are growing old and will soon be but a memory, while this superb young American has barely begun a career that promises many glories. Miss O'Neil will begin an engagement of four nights and a special matinee at the Salt Lake theatre next Wednesday evening, April 8, opening with a brilliant production of Sudermann's masterful drama "Magda." The remaining performances will be devoted to splendid presentments of Jiacometti's new historical tragedy, "Elizabeth, Queen of England," "The Jewess," "Camille," and the new Ibsen play, "Hetta Gabler."

Concerning her recent appearances there the San Francisco Critic says: "I never saw an actress as young as Nance O'Neil so intensely individual and original in her acting. Instead of imitating and assimilating and standing in line with the rest of her kind, she boldly works out her own conception by the light of sheer inspiration. She is worth fifty of the Blanche Bateses and Maud Adamses, so dear to New York."

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Probably no work of late years has so thoroughly engrossed the mind of the reading public or created more interest than Tolstoi's "Resurrection," an epic in prose of the human emotions. Sincerity is another striking feature of this work—the most essential of art. "Resurrection" is true to life; in it Tolstoi does not create life where it is not; he does not bring forth feelings, emotions where they do not spring up themselves. It is life, it is truth; truth is beautiful because it is true, and the beautiful interpretation of life is the highest form of art. The form, the body of the work is in perfect harmony with the tendency of its soul.

"Resurrection" has proven itself the dramatic rage and sensation of the day, and its original American production at the Grand theatre on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday should prove one of the notable amusement events of our dramatic season.

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Artistically, dramatically, and scenically "California," J. Rush Bronson's comedy drama, which comes to the Grand theatre Thursday, Friday and Saturday, is considered among the foremost. This production, to judge from its success, seems to have filled a long felt want, and its future is not hard to predict. The plot of the play is a strong one, dealing with the lights and shadows of life in a most charming manner. There is plenty of good comedy to lighten the heavier scenes. The company is an exceptionally strong one, including some of the best players in the dramatic profession, headed by Miss Rae Bronson and Mr. Ed M. Kimball. The scenic equipment is carried by the company and presents, among others, two beautiful stage pictures, the famous Yosemite valley and a view of Mount Shasta, which are pronounced by critics to be exact reproductions.

NANCE O'NEIL, AT THE SALT LAKE THEATRE.

ETHEL BROOKE FERGUSON;

Salt Lake girl who plays Nance Ransom in "Our New Minister" at the Salt Lake Theatre.

Rae Bronson as Dolores in "California" at the Grand.